THE TOWN O' DREAM.

By a beautiful stream lies the Town o' Dream,
On a beautiful summer plain,
With bells achime a golden time
To the tune of a golden strain.

The road lies straight through a golden gate—
Men call it the Port o' Sleep—
Where far below dim waters flow
Through chambers cool and deep.

O, fair and bright in the broad sunlight,
Her streets and her greening bowers,
And all day long a sleepy song
Murmurs of love and flowers.

And never a care can enter there,
Nor trouble to cause annoy.
There rest comes sweet to tolling feet
And weary hearts find joy.

Now would ye know the way to go
To the beautiful Town o' Dream?
Ye must seek the god of the Land o' Nod,
Ruler of things that seem.

And drawing near with humble cheer
Ye'll speak the Word of Kin,
And if your mind is good and kind
Ye'll freely enter in.

O, near and far his peoples are,
And he rules them, every one,
With a Pleasance deep and a Rod of Sleep
At setting of the sun.

By a beautiful stream lies the Town o' Dream.
—Weary are we and fain;
Come, let us try the portal high,
And win our Town again!
—A. B. de Mille, in N. Y. Independent.

My Strangest Case

BY GUY BOOTHBY.

Author of "Dr. Kikola," "The Beautiful White Devil," "Pharos, The Egyptian," Etc.

CHAPTER VII.—CONTINUED.

"Mr. Fairfax," said he, "I labor under the fear that you cannot understand my position. Can you realize what it is like to feel shut up in the dark, waiting and longing always for only one thing? Could you not let me come to Paris with you to-morrow?"

"Impossible," I said. "It is out of the question. It could not be thought of for a moment!"

"But why not? I can see no difficulty in it!"

"If for no other reason because it would destroy any chance of my even getting on the scent. I should be hampered at every turn."

He heaved a heavy sigh.

"Blind! blind!" he said with despair in his voice. "But I know that I shall meet him some day, and when I do—"

His ferocity was the more terrible by reason of his affliction.

"Only wait, Mr Kitwater," I replied. "Wait, and if I can help you, you shall have your treasure back again. Will you then be satisfied?"

"Yes, I'll be satisfied," he answered, but with what struck me as almost reluctance. "Yes, when I have my treasure back again I'll be satisfied, and so will Codd. In the meantime I'll wait here in the dark, the dark in which the days and nights are the same. Yes, I'll wait and wait and wait."

At that moment Miss Kitwater made her reappearance in the garden, and I rose to bid my clients farewell.

"Good-by, Mr. Kitwater," I said. "I'll write immediately I reach Paris, and let you know how I am getting on."

"You are very kind," Kitwater answered, and Codd nodded his head.

My hostess and I then set off down the drive to the high-road which we followed towards the village. It was a perfect evening, and the sun was setting in the west in a mass of crimson and gold. At first we talked of various commonplace subjects, but it was not very long before we came back, as I knew we should do, to the one absorbing topic.

"There is another thing I want to set right with you, Miss Kitwater," I said, as we paused upon the bridge to which I have elsewhere referred. "It is only a small matter. Somehow, however, I feel that I must settle it, before I can proceed further in the affair with any satisfaction to myself."

She looked at me in surprise.

"What is it?" she asked, "I thought we had settled everything."

"So far as I can see that is the only matter that remains," I answered. "Yet it is sufficiently important to warrant my speaking to you about it. What I want to know is, whom I am serving?"

"I don't think I understand," she said, drawing lines with her umbrella upon the stone coping of the bridge as she spoke.

"And yet my meaning is clear," I returned. "What I want to be certain of is, whether I am serving you or your uncle?"

"I don't think you are serving either of us," she answered. "You are helping us to right a great wrong."

"Forgive me, but that is merely trifling with words. I am going to be candid once more. You are paying the money, I believe?"

In some confusion she informed me that this certainly was the case.

"Very well, then, I am certainly your servant," I said. "It is your interests I shall have to study."

"I can trust them implicitly to you, I am sure, Mr. Fairfax," she replied. "And now here we are at the church. If you walk quickly you will be just in time to catch your train. Let me thank you again for coming down to-day."

"It has been a great pleasure to me," I replied. "Perhaps when I return from Paris you will permit me to come down again to report progress?"

"We shall be very pleased to see you," she answered. "Now good-by, and a pleasant journey to you!"

We shook hands and parted. As I passed along the road I watched her making her way along the avenue towards the church. There was need for me to shake my head.

"George Fairfax," said I, "it would require very little of that young lady's society to enable you to make a fool of yourself."

CHAPTER VIII.

Unlike so many of my countrymen I am prepared to state that I detest the French capital. I always make my visits to it as brief as possible, then, my business completed, off I fly again, seeming to breathe more freely when I am outside its boundaries. I don't know why this should be so, for I have always been treated with the utmost courtesy and consideration by its inhabitants, particularly by those members of the French detective force with whom I have been brought in contact.

On this visit I crossed with one of the cleverest Parisian detectives, a man with whom I have had many dealings. He was most anxious to ascertain the reason of my visit to his country. My assurance that I was not in search of any one of his own criminals seemed to afford him no sort of satisfaction. He probably regarded it as an attempt to put him off the scent, and I fancy he resented it. We reached Paris at seven o'clock, whereupon I invited him to dine with me at eight o'clock, at a restaurant we had both patronized on many previous occasions. He accepted my invitation, and promised to meet me at the time and place I named. On the platform awaiting our arrival was my man Dickson, to whom I had telegraphed, ordering him to meet me.

"Well, Dickson," I said, when I had bade the detective au revoir, "what about our man?"

"I've had him under my eye, sir," he answered. "I know exactly what he's been doing, and where he's staying."

"That's good news, indeed," I replied. "Have you discovered anything else about him?"

"Yes, sir," he returned. "I find that he's struck up a sudden acquaintance with a lady named Mme. Beaumarais, and that they are to dine together at the Cafe des Ambassadeurs to-night. They have been in and out of half the jewelers' shops in the Rue de la Paix to-day, and he's spending a mint of money on her."

"They are dining at the Cafe des Ambassadeurs to-night, did you say? At what time?"

"I cannot tell you that, sir," Dickson replied. "I only know that they are to dine there together to-night."

"And pray how did you find that out?"

"I made inquiries as to who she was, and where she lived, and then pumped her maid," he answered.

"You did not do anything that would excite his suspicions, I hope," I put in. "You ought to know by this time what women are."

"Oh, no, sir, you needn't be afraid," he said. "I was too careful for that. The maid and I are on very friendly terms. She believes me to be a Russian, and I've not denied it."

"It would be safest not to do so," I replied. "If she discovers that you are an Englishman, she might chance to mention the fact to her mistress. She would doubtless let it fall in conversation with him, and then all our trouble would be useless. You speak Russian, do you not?"

"Ony pretty well, sir," he answered. "I should be soon bowled out if I came in contact with a real one."

"Well, I think I will be somewhere near the Cafe des Ambassadeurs to-night just to make sure of my man. After that I'll tell you what to do next."

"Very good, sir," he returned. "I suppose you will be staying at the same place?"

"Yes! the same place," I replied. "If you have anything to communicate, you can either call, or send word to me there."

I thereupon departed for the quiet house at which I usually take up my abode when in Paris. The big hotels are places I steer clear of, for the simple reason that I often have business in connection with them, and it does not pay me to become too well known. At this little house I can go out and come in just as I please, have my meals at any time of the day or night, and am as well cared for as at my own abode in London. On this occasion the old lady of the house greeted me with flattering enthusiasm. She had received my telegram, she said, and my usual room awaited me. I accordingly ascended to it in order to dress myself for the dinner of the evening, and as I did so thought of the pretty bedroom I had seen on the previous day, which naturally led me to think of the owner of the house, at that moment my employer. In my mind's eye I could see her just as she had stood on that old stone bridge at Bishopstowe, with the sunset behind her and the church bells sounding across the meadows, calling the villagers to evensong. How much better it was, I argued, to be standing talking to her there in that old world peace, than to be dressing for a dinner at an up-to-date French restaurant. My toilet completed, I descended to the street, hired a fiacre, and drove to the restaurant where I had arranged to meet my friend. The place in question is neither an expensive nor a fashionable one. It has no halls of mirrors, no dainty little cabinets, but, to my thinking, you can obtain the best dinner in all Paris there. On reaching it I found my guest had been the first to arrive. We accordingly ascended the stairs to the room above, where we selected our table and sat down. My companion was a witty little man with half the languages of Europe on his tongue, and a knowledge of all the tricks and dodges of all the criminal fraternity at his finger-ends. He has since written a book on his experiences, and a stranger volume, or one more replete with a knowledge of the darker side of human nature it would be difficult to find. He had commenced his professional career as a doctor, and like myself had gradually drifted into the detective profession. Among other things he was an inimitable hand at disguising himself, as many a wretched criminal now knows to his cost. Even I, who know him so well, have been taken in by him. I have given alms to a blind beggar in the streets, have encountered him as a chiffonier prowling about the gutters, have sat next to him on an omnibus when he has been clothed as an artisan in a blue blouse, and on not one of those occasions have I ever recognized him until he made himself known to me. Among other things he was a decided epicure, and loved a good dinner as well as any of his compatriots. Could you but see him with his napkin tucked under his chin, his little twinkling eyes sparkling with mirth, and his face wreathed in smiles, you would declare him to be one of the jolliest-looking individuals you have ever encountered. See him, however, when he is on business and has a knotty problem to solve, and you will find a different man. The mouth has become one of iron, the eyes are as fierce as fierce can be. Some one, I remember, likened him to the great Napoleon, and the description is an exceedingly apt one.

"By the way," I said, as we took a peep into our second bottle of Perrier-Jouet, "there is a question I want to put to you. Do you happen to be acquainted with a certain Mme. Beaumarais?"

"I have known her for more years than she or I would care to remember," he answered. "For a woman who has led the life she has, she wears uncommonly well. A beautiful creature! The very finest shoulders in all Paris, and that is saying something."

He blew a kiss off the tips of his fingers, and raised his glass in her honor.

"I drink to her in this noble wine, but I do not let her touch my money. Oh, no, la belle Louise is a clever woman, a very clever woman, but money trickles through her fingers like water through a sieve. Let me think for a moment. She ruined Marquis D'Esmai, the Vicomte Cotforet, M. D'Armier and many others whose names I cannot now recall. The first is with our noble troops in Cochin China, the second is in Algeria, and the third I know not where, and now I have learnt since my arrival in Paris that she has got hold of a young Englishman, who is vastly wealthy. She will have all he has got very soon, and then he will begin the world anew. You are interested in that Englishman, of course?"

"How do you know that?"

"Because you question me about Mme. Beaumarais," he answered. "A good many people have asked me about her at different times, but it is always the man they want to get hold of. You, my astute Fairfax, are interested in the man, not because you want to save him from her, but because he has done a little something which he should not have done, elsewhere. The money he is lavishing on Mme. Louise, whence does it come? Should I be very wrong if I suggested gems?"

I gave a start of surprise. How on earth did he guess this?

"Yes! I see I'm right," he answered with a little laugh. "Well, I knew it a long time ago. Ah, you are astonished! You should surely never allow yourself to be surprised by anything. Now I will tell you how I came to know about the gems. Some time ago a certain well-known lady of this city lost her jewel-case in a mysterious manner. The affair was placed in my hands, and when I had exhausted Paris, I went to Amsterdam, en route if necessary for London. You know our old friends, Levenstein and Schartzer?"

I nodded. I had had dealings with that firm on many occasions.

"Well, as I went into their office, I saw the gentleman who has been paying attention to the lady we have been discussing, come out. I have an excellent memory for faces, and when I saw him to-night entering the Cafe des Ambassadeurs, I recognized him immediately. Thus the mystery is explained."

He shrugged his shoulders and spread his hands apart, like a conjurer who has just vanished a rabbit or an orange.

"Has the man of whom we are speaking done very wrong?" he inquired.

"The stones he sold in London and Amsterdam belonged to himself and his two partners," I answered. "He has not given them their share of the transaction. That is all."

"They had better be quick about it then, or they are not likely to get anything. It would be a very big sum that would tempt la belle Louise to be faithful for a long period. If your employers really desire to punish him, and they are not in want of money, I should say do not let them interfere. She will then nibble-nibble at what he has got like a mouse into a store of good things. Then presently that store will be all gone, and then she will give up, and he, the man, will go out and shoot himself, and she will pick up somebody else, and will begin to nibble-nibble just as before. As I say, there will be somebody else, and somebody else, right up to the end of the chapter. And with every one she will grow just an imperceptible bit older. By and by the wrinkles will appear; I fancy there are just one or two already. Then she will not be so fastidious about her hundred of thousand francs, and will condescend to think of mere thousands. After that it will come to simple hundreds. Then there will be an interval—after which a garret, a charcoal-brazier, and the morgue. I have known so many, and it is always the same. First, the diamonds, the champagne, the exquisite little dinners at the best restaurants, and at last the brazier, the closed doors and windows, and the cold stone slab. There is a moral in it, my dear friend, but we will not look for it to-night. When do you intend to commence business with your man?"

"At once," I answered. "He knows that I am after him, and my only fear is that he will make a bolt. I cannot understand why he is dallying in Paris so long?"

"For the simple reason that he is confident he has put you off the scent," was my companion's reply. "He is doing the one foolish thing the criminal always does sooner or later; that is to say, he is becoming over-confident of his own powers to elude us. You and I, my friend, should be able to remember several such instances. Now, strange to say, I came across a curious one the other day. Would you care to hear it?"

He lit a cigarette and blew a cloud of smoke while he waited for my answer.

"Very much," I said, being well aware that his stories were always worth hearing.

[To Be Continued.]

ST. ELMO'S FIRE.

One Instance in Which the Mysterious Light Appeared in an Unmistakable Manner.

The phenomena of a phosphorescent light at the masthead is one so rarely witnessed by others than superstitious sailors that it is seldom one finds an intelligent account of it. The following, by Rev. Dr. Mason, of Burma, is therefore of interest, says Youth's Companion:

"On one occasion I was with others on board a small schooner at anchor off Tavoy Point, when a severe squall of wind and rain, accompanied by much thunder and lightning came on.

"After the storm began to abate, we were aroused by a cry on deck: 'There is a ball of fire at the masthead!' We went up and saw, what is very rarely seen, 'the fire of St. Elmo,' or 'the fire of St. Elmo and St. Anne.' It exhibited an appearance quite different from all the descriptions I have read. Phipson says: 'Lord Napier observed the fire St. Elmo in the Mediterranean during a fearful thunderstorm. As he was retiring to rest, a cry from those aloft: "St Elmo and St. Anne!" induced him to go on deck. The masthead was completely enveloped in a blaze of pale phosphoric light.'

"The St. Elmo that I saw did not envelop the masthead in a blaze at all, but it took the form of a perfect blaze of phosphoric light, perhaps a foot in diameter. It was not on the summit of the mast, but touched it on one side, playing about it when the vessel rolled, as a large soap bubble, a trifle lighter than the air.

"After remaining some ten minutes the light grew fainter, and finally died out like a soap bubble."

Her Whist Playing Mamma.

Two little girls sat on the steps chatting over their dolls. Said one: "My mamma tells me lovely stories before I go to bed. Does yours?" "No," replied the other. "My mamma is hardly ever at home when I go to bed, and when she is she is too tired always to tell me any stories. She has to play whist every day. She teaches it, too. I wish she didn't, because I get awfully lonesome and papa isn't home much, so I 'most always have to go to bed alone," and the little thing added, pathetically, hugging her doll to her motherly little bosom, "when I grow up I'll never play whist. And I'll rock my little girl every night before she goes to bed." Here was a childish outburst of a stored-up sense of radical wrong in her life. And there are too many little hearts oppressed by this sense of deprivation. But it is not alone the children who suffer from the whist fashion. It is responsible for more tantrums and breakdowns of over-wrought women than women's clubs' work or woman suffrage, or any other in-doors diversion of society.—Boston Transcript.

Modest Fees.

Sir Walter Scott's first client was a burglar. He got the fellow off, but the man declared that he hadn't a penny to give him for his services. Two bits of useful information he offered, however, and with these the young lawyer had to be content. The first was that a yelping terrier inside the house was a better protection against thieves than a big dog outside and the second, that no sort of lock bothered his craft so much as an old, rusty one.

Small compensation as this was, the first brief of the noted French lawyer, M. Rouher, yielded still less. The peasant for whom M. Rouher won the case asked how much he owed him:

"Oh, say two francs," said the modest advocate.

"Two francs!" exclaimed the peasant. "That is very high. Won't you let me off with a franc and a half?"

"No," said the counsel "two francs or nothing."

"Well, then," said his client, "I'd rather pay nothing."

And with a bow he left.—Green Bag

Also Requires Greater Ability.

"Do you think women should propose?"

"No; the sport of making men propose is much more exciting and enjoyable."—Chicago Post.

PERSONAL AND LITERARY.

Booth Tarkington draws his stories before he writes them. He not only maps out the scenes, but makes a complete picture of each one of them.

Mrs. Howard Kingscote, the English novelist, says that American audiences are anxious to hear facts, while English audiences demand to be amused.

Thomas Moore often wrote a short poem almost impromptu. He consumed over two years in reading and preparing material for "Lallah Rookh," and two years more in writing that inimitable poem.

One of Milton's biographers says that nearly 20 years elapsed between the sketching out of the plan of "Paradise Lost" and the completion of that work. The actual labor of composition was condensed into two or three years.

Rudyard Kipling is the illustrator as well as the author of a new volume called "Just So Stories," and his pictures are said to be admirable. Evidently he gets his gift from his father, who will be remembered as the illustrator of "Kim" and the maker of the cover design for "The Day's Work."

The late Bret Harte was in his sixty-third year and had 44 book titles to his credit. "The Luck of Roaring Camp" rescued him from poverty and uncertainty and brought him to the summit of the hopes of all young authors of that day, the Atlantic. Mrs. Ann S. Stephens once said of him that "his gift was a lead, not a pocket."

Some first editions of Oliver Goldsmith brought high prices in London recently: "The Citizen of the World," $530; "The Vicar of Wakefield," $670; "The Life of Henry St. John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke," $310. Horace Walpole's copy of Gray's "Odes" brought $855, Herrick's "Hesperides," $375; Pope's "Essay on Man," $950; FitzGerald's "Rubaiyat," $290, and Charles Tennyson's "Sonnets," with pen and ink sketches by Thackeray, $1,500.

When Mark Twain was beginning his career as a humorous lecturer he one day arranged with a charming female acquaintance that she should sit in a box and start the applause when he stroked his mustache. The lecturer started off so well that he did not need any such help, however, for he caught the audience from the first. By and by, when not saying anything worthy of particular notice, he happened to pull his mustache, and his anxious ally in the box at once broke into furious applause. Mark was all but broken up by the misadventure and ever afterward carefully avoided employing such help to success.

FEAT OF BRIDGE BUILDING.

Quick Work in Removing an Old Span and Substituting a New One.

The double tracks of the Pennsylvania railroad cross the Schuykill river at Girard avenue, Philadelphia, on a stone-arch bridge with a single steel-truss span over the middle channel. This was recently replaced in 15 minutes, without the least delay or interruption to the almost continuous traffic of long, heavy freight trains and high-speed expresses which cross the bridge every hour in the 24, without obstructing the river, says Frank W. Skinner, in Century. A temporary steel span was built alongside the old one and at a lower level, so that its top was a little below the bottom of the old structure. On this was erected, in the usual way, the complete new span with the tracks laid on it. Powerful hoisting-engines were set on platforms at the ends of the old span on the opposite sides of the bridge, and operated four sets of tackles, by which, after the tracks had been cut, both spans, weighing together nearly 2,000,000 pounds, were pulled sidewise on double tiers of long horizontal rails, with over 300 solid steel rollers between them. In this way the old span was displaced by the new one, which followed it like a very substantial shadow, until permanently seated in exactly the same position. Two and a half minutes after the last train crossed the old span, the connections were broken, the engines were started, and in 2½ minutes more had pulled both spans simultaneously the full distance of about 37 feet. In eight minutes more the first train had passed over the new span, and it was in regular service. The engines and tackles were shifted, and a set of greased rails was arranged at a low level, on which the temporary span was pulled to a position directly below the old span, and served as a support while the latter was taken to pieces. The great weight of the spans, the difficulties from incessant traffic, and the speed and accuracy with which the spans were moved, make this one of the most remarkable of feats.

What He Wanted.

"Your honor," said the prisoner, who had been brought in for a preliminary hearing after six weeks in the county jail, "I want a change of menu."

"You mean," said the judge, kindly, "that you want a change of venue. Now, the proper course of—"

"No, I don't mean that. I want a change of menu. That sheriff seems to have tried to corner the corned beef supply of the world."—Baltimore American.

A Slim Breakfast.

"Get up, Bobbie!" called his mother from the bottom of the stair; "you know the early bird gets the worm!"

"Is that all you got fer breakfast?" replied Bobbie, sleepily, as he turned over for another snooze.—Ohio State Journal.

Transferrence of Impulse.

Bardlet—Do you know, my friend, that I have become a firm believer in the mysterious transferrence of impulse? You recall that spring idyl of mine, which you said was an inspiration? Well, as I told you before, when I wrote that I was fired by an irresistible impulse.

Friend—Yes, I remember.

"Well, sir, I submitted that inspiration to the editor of the Bombardier, and—would you believe it, sir?—I was fired again, but this time the editor had the impulse."—Richmond Dispatch.

It is impossible that a man who is false to his friends should be true to his country.—Bishop Berkeley.